

After speaking with representatives of each of the functional areas about their records and viewing their records retained in office areas and in storage areas in Town Hall, we entered the information into a database. Each department reviewed the first draft; we revised the schedules accordingly and sent each department the revised version. We did not receive any comments or revisions.

There are currently the following fields:

Record Name – what the area calls the record series

Record Description – further explanation of the contents of the record series, if necessary

Format - the media (paper, magnetic, electronic) in which the record or portions of the record exist

Arrangement - the filing system for paper records

Record Copy – if the area thinks it maintains the “record” or official copy of the record

State Series Number – the State’s municipal records retention schedule number or numbers that seem to apply to the record as described by the functional area

State Minimum Recordkeeping Requirement – the minimum length of time, or completed action necessary, before the State will approve the destruction of the record

Department Practice – the length of time the area is keeping the record

Town Retention – at present, left blank in most cases, but as the next step to be agreed upon by the area, whatever review committee is established, a representative from the State’s Records Management Unit, the Town Manager, and, we suggest, Town Counsel

Notes – explanation of retention requirements, additional description of recordkeeping, questions, comments

The *Department Practice* field can be deleted once the schedules are approved as the *Town Retention* period will be the one to use. *Format* and *Arrangement* fields also could be deleted although perhaps a “master” schedule might retain the information. Some of the *Notes* should be deleted when no longer relevant. The *State Series Number* and *Requirement* should remain so that the information is readily available when destruction approval forms are completed.

At some point, the Town may wish to add a field that gives a unique number to the record. It should only be used for those records that are unique to the functional area; any records common to several areas will need to have the same number. We have

started a *Records in Common* table, form, report that ultimately would list those records that many departments may be creating and keeping, often convenience copies where another functional area is responsible for maintenance of the “record” copy. By providing such a schedule, the recordkeeping responsibilities will be clarified.

We think after a review of the schedules by everyone, the Clerk should send Terry French of the State’s Records Management Unit copies of the schedules and a list of questions about those records that do not seem to be on the State’s schedule, or where there may be question about interpretation of the law, regulation or State schedule. Retention schedules always must be updated because new records continue to be created or work processes change. We think a discussion with him will assist both the Town and the State.

In reviewing the draft schedules, here are some questions we would ask:

Assessing

Motor vehicle abatements – There appears to be a business need now for all Assessors to keep these records for 10 years

Property Record Cards: Real Estate – Any advice about Computer output microfilm [COM]; information about what other Assessing Departments are doing

Motor vehicle valuation lists – is it OK to donate ones past their retention period to an historical society? Any State approval required?

Collector - Tax commitments are now electronic – advice about COM

Health (Environmental) -

Private, public water supply, wastewater treatment facilities. Is there someone at DEP who could indicate how long DEP retains the reports or provide CMR references if there are recordkeeping requirements

Health (Health care)

Case investigations, immunizations, patient files. How do Health Departments interpret these retention periods?

HR

Lack of State retention requirement re complaints, grievances, union contracts, workers comp. Any recommendations?

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Why Termination + 20 years for Personnel files and not a longer time period, especially for those people more likely to experience hazardous conditions.

Planning Zoning

Lack of State requirement re litigation, performance bonds, escrow accounts, mitigation funds. Any recommendations?

Town Manager

Lack of State requirement re claims against municipality (ones settled by insurance company), litigation. Any recommendations?

Town Manager / Accountant (and likely Water, Highway)

Seeming discrepancy between State schedule and Office of the Inspector General interpretation of the Uniform Procurement Act relating to retention period, types of records. Any advice regarding Procurement records and Contract records?

Section 1: Draft Recordkeeping Practices / Retention Schedules: Database Reports

The following pages contain printouts of MS Access database reports for the participating departments. We also have begun a separate schedule called *Records in Common* representing records, often convenience copies, that many departments may be retaining. A CD containing the database tables, forms, and reports has been sent by mail.